

NEWS RELEASE



***OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
San Diego, California***

***United States Attorney
Carol C. Lam***

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For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - July 7, 2006

United States Attorney Carol C. Lam announced that Mario Alvarez and Samuel McClaren, former United States Supervisory Border Patrol Agents, each pled guilty today in federal court in San Diego to one count of bribery and one count of filing false tax returns. Alvarez and McClaren, pursuant to a plea agreement, entered their pleas of guilty before United States District Judge John A. Houston.

In connection with their pleas, Alvarez and McClaren admitted to receiving a combined total of \$186,240.00 in bribes from an alien smuggling organization for helping to smuggle aliens in the El Centro Border Patrol Sector, which includes the majority of Imperial County, California. In their guilty pleas, each defendant admitted that he received these bribes in exchange for failing to enforce, and for violating, the immigration laws of the United States. In particular, they admitted that they released numerous illegal aliens from the custody and control of Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, to members of an alien smuggling organization in exchange for cash payments. They also admitted releasing into the United States previously apprehended members of the alien smuggling organization, also illegal aliens, from the custody of the Department of Homeland Security in exchange for cash payments.

Additionally, Alvarez and McClaren each agreed to criminally forfeit their portion of the \$186,240.00 in illicit proceeds.

United States Attorney Lam said, "These are Border Patrol agents who smuggled illegal aliens. It doesn't get much worse than that."

Richard L. Skinner, Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Office of Inspector General (OIG) said, "The men and women of the Border Patrol continue to enjoy an outstanding and professional reputation as our country's first line of defense of our international borders. Their work increases our country's border security and national security. Today's guilty pleas of two Supervisory Border Patrol Agents restores the public's confidence in federal law enforcement that serve to protect our citizens and identify corruption that compromises our national security. The OIG will continue to be committed in working with our law enforcement partners to identify and aggressively investigate all allegations of corruption to protect our borders and the integrity of DHS personnel, programs, and operations."

Ronald Krajewski, Acting Special Agent in Charge, IRS Criminal Investigation, said, "When officers of the law who are assigned to protect our borders ignore the laws they are sworn to uphold, it causes a break down in the security of our country and the American public. IRS Criminal Investigation will continue to ensure that individuals who fail to accurately report their income to the IRS, including those who wear a badge and abuse their authority for financial gain, will be brought to justice."

Sentencing is scheduled for September 29, 2006, at 9:00 a.m. before Judge Houston.

DEFENDANTS

Case Number: 06CR0466-JAH

Mario Alvarez
Samuel McClaren

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Title 18, United States Code, Section 201(b)(2)(A) and (c) - Bribery

The charge carries a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine or 3 times the amount of the bribe (whichever is greater), a mandatory special assessment of \$100, supervised release of not more than 3 years, and forfeiture of any and all property constituting or derived from proceeds traceable to the offense of conviction.

Title 26, United States Code, Section 7206(1) - Filing False Tax Return

The charge carries a maximum penalty of 3 years in prison, a fine of not more than \$100,000 (together with the costs of prosecution), a mandatory special assessment of \$100, and supervised release of up to 1 year.

Title 18, United States Code, Section 982(a)(6) - Criminal Forfeiture

AGENCIES

Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General

Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation

Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement

U.S. Border Patrol

Federal Bureau of Investigation